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Letter from Linda Grace Hoyer to John Updike, October 16, 1950

Linda Grace Hoyer

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The first person singular might be better for this story and me. Perhaps you can decide the thing for me at Christmastime. Grammy worries all the time about you. The rest of us about half the time. So, write as freely as you can. October 16, 1950

Love, *Walter*

Dear John:

It is a perfect day on our patch of green as far as I can see: flawless sky, singing birds, and swinging feet (on grandpa). And I hope to be noble, full of good deeds, and kind words. Following a rather stormy Sunday, it is essential that I do something to redeem myself.

On Sundays, the procedure now is for Jaddy to walk to Sunday School and for me to follow with Grampy in the Buick about an hour later. Yesterday, however, the clock was a bit slow, grandpa's beard a trifle tougher, and my feet somewhat dirtier than usual. Naturally, a spiritual crisis resulted. The sermon was on the business of being a witness, a bearer of good news, and Reverend Snyder really got hot. We, having been late, were well out in front and enjoying ourselves immensely. Near the middle of the discourse, the reverend said (in a heartbroken voice) that certain members of his committee of "evangelists" were so remiss in their duty that they had failed to invite their new neighbors to attend church. "If you won't go to see new people in the neighborhood, won't you at least be kind enough to tell your pastor they are there." Sometime last evening it occurred to us that we were the ones he was scolding.

In my present state of repentance, I'm sorry, too, for saying such a mean thing about Alice Bullock. It is a cute poem and it was nice of the Bullock to take three cents out of her uncle's pants to write to tell you.

Aside from the job (and it is a job) of learning to live with four old people with no youthful relief whatever, I have been trying to get back to Ponce de Leon. This is almost impossible since none of us have any real faith in my talent, the undertaking is tough in itself, and my housemates, now that you are gone, seem to think I ought to pay them a good deal of attention. But I've gotten pretty definite with them and started the story with "dear Juan" at the age of seven. I'm trying the omniscient point of view which is not natural to me.